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outposts

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PATRICK GALVIN

My Lover to Market

THEY'VE taken my lover to market
To bind and condemn him to death
For his loving of me.

They've taken my lover to market
To open his heart with a knife
And destroy him on me.

His face is a fire in the night
And his mouth is an ocean of blood
On my face;

His word is a power to my lip,
A thorn in the deep of my womb
And a guide to my race.

They've taken my lover to market
To take out his eyes with a lash
For his loving of me.

They've taken my lover to market
To strip to a terror of flesh
And destroy him on me.

His cries are a wake in my bed
And his death is a dagger to murder
The crown of my sleep;

His dreams are a storm in my veins,
A root in the wind of my life
And a cross I must keep.

They've taken my lover to market
They've taken my lover to market
And he'll die in a rage and a blind
And be damned and be free.

JOHN KNIGHT

Statement at Christmas

AS for his nature, which, how many, or how related,
of this I know nothing.
Certainly as a man his nature is to be worshipped
and certainly a man's nature is never discarnate
But in a market town
there was an explosion last night whose waves still surge
after two thousand years
against the drums and trumpets of our inner shores
silently.

As for substance and infinite and whence proceeding, of these too
I am wholly ignorant.
Agreed whoever has the courage of his entire love
is a child raised to the power of God
But at his heretic-stake
was lit the candle of whose flame all altars
are flickering shadows,
was spoken the reverberant myth that echoes
from faith to faith.

As for person, and the shamrock as image of God,
I make no guess.
It is true that either Man is the image of God or God of Man
and there are three persons in one man
But we celebrate
the bearing down of a child who is not yet born into time
this night
from the "great ring of pure and endless light"
into the dark.

As for nature, substance, person, god and/or man,
miraculous birth,
I cannot say.
She bore him a normal time, and the birth
was as marvellous as yours or Spring's
But the shuffle of words
was made, that deal, into a different pack
for a gambling game
where love-all is method and stake and aim,
the lawless, and only, rule.

DOROTHY STRINGER

Old Age

THE boughs are stripped. Through the metallic air
They struggle upward, intricately bare;
The true tree-shape is manifested there.

Movement is stilled and colour sinks to grey,
All summer sounds are muted by decay,
Frost has arrested life, cut short the day.

The solstice has put forth a hand to freeze
Ponds that were lashed and dimpled by the breeze;
They lie in crystal peace beneath the trees.

The north light draws with brush-strokes sharp and clean
Each stone and twig as on a Chinese screen;
Urgently limns the constant and the seen.

The winter silence is austere and rare,
Strong with the beat of integrated prayer:
The true tree-shape is manifested there.

MARGARET STANLEY-WRENCH

Music in the Cathedral

UP spring the arches, clasping in a knot of stone.
Hands join in spires of prayer, the candles swarm,
And the honey-gold of the altar, serene with saints
Awaits our music. First the racehorse trumpets
That wince and shinney, nervous as whipcord fillies,
And the organ's hooves battering, a shout of voices
Heavy with praise, twisting in a vine of sound.
The overlapping leaves, the tendrils wind
Up the dark pillars, a canopy of singing,
Across the groined roof, through the arched nave ringing.
Yet silence only makes that cadence whole,
Silence, from which the chords rise up, the darkness
From which the light is seen. The candles fade,
Our music dies, shadows dredge the gold.
One after one the singers go, the trumpets
Are sheathed, and only the whisper of prayer lingers,
And stillness, whose dark womb bears the living Word.

VALERIE MINOGUE

Carreg Cennen Castle

THESE arrowed windows fly to scenes
we can no longer see:
the old stones sing a silence like a song,
a silence visited by memory;
sounds that have fallen in the well of time
echo their meanings in the tough gaunt walls
that stood for something on a long-gone day
with heart and purpose. History
was not made here, yet in some way
has touched the rough periphery.

We know the soil, the blue-shawled trees,
we know the way the wild birds fly,
the curve and hollows of the hills
cupping the valley to the mother sky:
to us they left this monument,
grey reticence, a spilling stone,
filling the valley silently
with stories we have always known
along the blood and in the bone.

ROBERT GITTINGS

Kilvert

(*At Clyro*)

AN angel satyr walks these hills"—
Not only here but in us all,
The Janus face of fighting wills
Grimaces from each hedge and wall.

Some see, and never look again;
Some look too long and are obsessed;
Pinioned between desire and pain
Dangle most men till age gives best.

Yet he, priest of the ancient rite,
Saw and pursued, till once more ran
Over these mountains broad delight,
Bare-legged nymphs, god-natured Pan.

His epitaph at thirty-nine:
"Here lies, elect from senile ills,
Mankind truth-naked, beast divine—
An angel satyr walks these hills."

W. M. TIDMARSH

Predicament

OCCASIONALLY we all reach the stage
Of wanting words for what no words can tell,
And when we do perhaps it's just as well
That lacking words we cannot really gauge
The true extent of what it is that must
Be left unsaid, and so may come to realise
That each of us, in spite of all surmise,
Must take his dumb and ultimate self on trust.

The danger is, of course, that being dumb
This self may grow to doubt the possibility
Of proving its existence, and become
Careless of making gestures that, like swords
Swung at the shield of our complacency,
Ring echoes that sound deceptively like words.

DONALD THOMAS

Making a Definition

HOLD the fruit firmly, with the knife's edge slice
And peel until the meaning is defined,
Dig out the shape of an eternal truth.

The peelings fall away at each precise
Cut, the removal of ambiguous rind
Leaves just a shrinking shape to call the truth.

Held side by side the error is quite clear,
Object and description still overlap.
Only the greasy seed is left to grip

After the shredding, safe from the blade's shear,
Squirming until the fingers' closing trap
Pulps the hard parable sealed in the pip.

DANNIE ABSE

Lament of the Elder

GO, horseman. "And the lady?"
I have neither water for your horse
nor a clean sheet for your bed.
Yes, go, for it is a time of famine.
All night I fished by the hole
and with my hooks dragged nothing up.
Who poisoned my pure well?
What, in my ruined pasture, cries?
Lady, you should have known me once:
the integrity of my coloured coat,
my cartridge belt in mother o' pearl.
I was a meadowboy in a naked beauty.
The hawks flew to my whistle,
The fruit exaggerated my trees,
and the singing, oh the long singing,
I thought it would never stop
till Death came to the bank of brightness
to drink my reflection up.
But now that coat on the hanger lies
Threadbare with my degradations.
My fruit are rotten in the orchard
and the green wheat was with locust.
So go, horseman. Take the lady.
I have neither water for your horse
nor a clean sheet for your bed.

PHOEBE HESKETH

She Knows Me Not

PLUCKING the daisy-flower of apprehension—
(*She knows me . . . She knows me not . . .*)
I blindly pass
Through huge doom-flying doors of thick plate-glass
Into the Institution—
(the disparaged name "asylum" seems more sweet,
more like a real retreat
from the thistle-world to regions of mown grass).

Will she be out or in?
In sun or shade, protected from the din
of the grinding day?
I pluck the petals and the pointers spin—
She knows me and
She knows me not—in crazy revolution.
Which will it be, please God, this chosen day?
Say, or let the senseless daisy say,
She knows me.

Alone in a corner, looped with shade, she's there
staring her shuttered stare
that looks but does not see—
She knows me
not.

The world forgetting, by the world forgot.
This is the flotsam-jetsam of the tide
that runs with purpose to the sea outside.
For her all purpose locks within herself.
I cannot reach; the inaccessible shelf
Is bare—
"O, darling it's a lovely day . . ." that stare
breaks down my wall of words; takes brick by brick
into the vast of silence; trick by trick
I try to win her back without avail.

Today she's like a ship that sails blank-sail
Across this friendly bay;
no wind, no word
can change the self-set course, no helmsman steers:
she is the ship, the mainsail and the crew
the winds obey.
"Even the objective waves bow down to you!"
There's nothing any man can say
or do.
My comfort warmly brought all blown away
like dandelion fluff.
Not to be able to give! The great rebuff
Is loud with silence, stiff as frozen snow.
Nearness is less than nothing: we cannot meet
when the soul's away; like a stranger in the street
she gazes through me as I turn to go.

P. BRIAN COX

The Unintended

THINGS that are meant to be
come imperceptibly
and imperceptibly pass
like the fine flower of grass.

So without knowledge meet
enamoured hands, mouths greet
strange mouths in sexual kiss—
there the unsearchable is.

Australia

ALAN CHAMBERS

Rehearsal

THERE is no shadow in the light
That glares upon the whitewashed wall.
The actions we rehearse are false,
We are not really here at all.

Our arms enfold our warm conceit.
We quicken to our bodies call.
The curtain falls to show we lie,
We are not really here at all.

How can we act beyond the play?
The dust lies thick upon the stalls.
A cleaner sweeps an empty aisle,
We are not really here at all.

Practise pretence, parade the pride,
All turns to gold before the fall.
If we must lie to tell our truth,
We are not really here at all.

BRIAN MERRIKIN HILL

The Party

WHO is not here? I have invited all
who said they wished to come or whom I sought.
As they sit round the room I hear their small
insistent voices interrupting thought.

There is no vacant chair; and every kind
of conversational gambit is arranged.
Bishop and scientist, painter, brilliant mind
clatter their cups and tell why things have changed,

and what will happen, what is needed. Those
I love are here, the dark brown girl, the sage
whose bitter words fall wisely. Yet I close
the door regretfully, I search the page

of invitations for the missing name.
Who is not here? Oh whose step by the door
do I most anxiously await with shame?
Than all these one forgotten matters more.

ADRIAN SANDEMAN

For the Agony Column

POET, aged twenty-nine, in desperation,
Having own hair but short of teeth and weary
Of a god-awful present situation,
Living alone in lodgings, fear and theory,
Seeks, as the last hope of his own salvation
And the one road to real regeneration—
Having tried many such, erotic, beery,
Arty, religious and idealistic,
Socio-political and mad and mystic—
Seeks, as a last straw in the whirlpool suction
Of a down-dragging death, an introduction
To a kind, serious-minded, gentle girl:
Height five foot two or three or not much bigger,
Age twenty-four, unostentatious figure,
Eyes like dark pools, black hair that doesn't curl,
Equable temper, good heart, graceful carriage,
Pale skin and soft voice, with a view to marriage,
And with a further view to love and laughter,
Children and home and, happily ever after,
Sharing a normal and contented life:
Poet, or so he likes to think, seeks wife.

ANTHONY SMITH

El Cid

YOU need no shadow now, Roderigo Diaz,
Count of Bivar, sun to the shapes of shadows
Declining as if in ballet; nor Ximena,
Who followed your ghost for light, mingling her form
In your train, catching a reflected cause.

Recognising the wax of wings, you fought
Beneath the sky, where clouds would not dement
The record of your flight; the Moors sufficed
As backcloth for your mirrored giant, stalking
Like a hawk that need not look above,

Knowing your prey antipodal to the sun,
And you the axis of a perfect world.
You watched unceasingly your shadow moving
Towards identifiable slaughter, hungry,
With the fear of sleep succeeding triumph.

Nearer the ground, more detailed there your shadow—
You hovered, gazing, satisfied with prey
That could not but give cause for further conflict.
After your last triumph, Count of Bivar,
No sunbeam reached to imprint you where you lay,

Under a clouded sky; you gazed, perhaps,
At Ximena, or at your lance and helmet,
And caught reflected there your own eyes' heat.
Futile now to fly, despite your impulse,
For what you had of heat within your heart

Melted your wings, condemned you to a cell
Of contemplation of your own achievement.
Distracted only by the beams you made,
Aware of no shadows, inward searching, you
Discovered no conflict, only a death in quiet.

JAMES TURNER

Kynance Cove

CURL over the white waves
To shake the edges of the world
Rattling between the rock fringes
Of earth.

Thunder of water tilt the border
Of earth seaward. The gulls lean
Into thrown spray of the ever-riding
Combers making for the last land,
Spilling upwards, breaking over
Outposts of earth, reseeding the barren sands
With churned pebbles. Lie here
The sea-rounded stones of a beach's face,
Lie abovetide inert, infertile.

Curl the white waves over
Untrodden sand, pour into the hidden
Home of anemone and fringed weed
Like a welcome. Curl the great incoming
Tide inevitable, eating away
Boundaries of the known,
So that dull rock
Lives again in its watery polishing.

Sea is come again to the rockarms
Wind-eager, rock-shaped, scented
With cliff flowers, thrift and the sprinkled
Garlic, tamarisk and hedge parsley.

Curl the white waves
Over last land.

ROBERT THOMPSON

New Year's Eve Poem

NOW call a truce with time
alone on the midnight shore
or with a lover in hand,
and the luminous lips
of the night-riding tide
curl to obliterate your history
mapped on obedient sand—
and the griefs like dropped stones
splinter a cry from wounded water.
Now at slow ebb of this year,
at dead tide, with all the dead
selves, the other loves
laid like fish on the wet rock,
leave your private cove,
enter the deceiving sea
and, solitary naked swimmer,
aim for the illusive isle—
but
desire will pick at your ear
siren-voiced above prattle of waves,
the willing worm inherit
and burn in his element.

New Zealand

PAUL CASIMIR

Winter Outside: an anticipation

YOU give suck and smile,
And I uncross my legs.
Winter outside: Our coats
Hung on their different pegs.

Here in the arms of snow
A burning child plays,
Tossing the wish that fell
Gently through all our days.

You give suck and smile.
But I take down my coat,
And walk where he must walk
With the darkness at his throat.

EDWIN BROCK

Psychology

IF I name this thing and call it fear
And say that mystery is nothing but desire,
I break the back that brings the chains to bear,
I make a salmon-leap from pan to fire;

Or if I say to you in such a way
As sifted, weighted and ground down,
That night is but another darkened day,
I strip the trappings and reveal the clown.

And clown-clad ghosts will drift away
As sifted, weighted and ground down,
They feel the fear of night flow into day
And blossom where another seed was blown;

But I will call my ghosts by other names,
Preserve in them their older ghostly role
And keep the fat alight upon the flames
And save the beanstalk from the widow's pole.

For if I name this thing and call it fear
The magic melts that stiffens our desire
And broken-backed the chains will reappear
As waterfalls to pacify our fire.

J. R. BROWNFIELD

For Amaryllis in the Sun

(To Dorothy Van Ghent)

EACH man of us buries the seeds
Of his chosen madness
In the black soil of his silence,
Laughs a little, sniffles perhaps
In the back room of his shadow,
And hopes to hell that nothing blooms.
But you, you've got to talk,
As if you were the only one
Who ever walked the fields of light
And found them empty,
Or, like sickness, saw the crouching black
Beneath each sun-green blade.

Sure, we all plant a stone
Above our seeds, but after dark.
And some of us say bruised words,
Softly in our beds. But your seeds
Are precious because, like ours,
They are your own. So you
Must build your temple on them,
And squat there like a sibyl
Hatching madness at her only fire.

And we, with tears in our laughing eyes
And adoration in our beards,
Must dance your mumbles in pretty patterns,
Our shadows on your walls,
Which cannot be home for anyone,
Shadows whirling your carnival whims
Into the stately wake
Of your Magdalene ascension
Toward all kinds of flowering sky.

U.S.A.

REVIEWS

The Shaping Spirit: A. Alvarez (Chatto & Windus, 15s.).

NOT so long ago my Sunday afternoons were apt to get lost in the volcanic cloud of a fury such as few but Mr. Alvarez could kindle in me by practically his every utterance on poetry. And now here I am prepared to swear that this is an extremely good book: in fact, in the strict sense of the word, an *excellent* book.

The great thing is that Mr. Alvarez reaches his conclusions by thought. *Not* by a natural perversity enforced by an overwhelming desire to prove a point—which seems to me to be the process by which too much of the 'poetic criticism' of today comes to exist. I'm not saying that one can possibly agree with all this critic's opinions. But one can see how he gets there. One can even admire his way of getting there. For he has an original mind, he has learning, force, clarity. And if he is very much more impressive on what he likes than on what he doesn't care for—well, who isn't? Nobody as young as Mr. Alvarez, and precious few elders either.

In a book of criticism the reader's most intense moments of excitement are caused, I think, by passages which make him react in one of three ways: (1) *Yes, yes! Exactly what I've always thought myself!* (2) *Why, that's true, and it sheds a fresh light on the whole matter for me.* (3) *Good Heavens, NO!*

For me, here are some examples:

(1) "Auden has never written, by the standard of his own best work, a good personal poem. . . . They say he can turn out any form of verse at well-nigh a moment's notice. He can also deal with any subject or occasion, provided it does not touch him too closely, or, if it does, provided he does not have to treat it seriously." (*Yes, yes!* etc.)

(2) "In Yeats's poetry there is a continual tension between the bitterness of what he says and the strength and sweep with which he says it." (*Why, that's true,* etc.)

(3) "The only native English poet of any importance to survive the First World War was D. H. Lawrence." There is a footnote to this giving the reasons why A.A. considers Robert Graves a non-survivor. (*NO!*)

The essay on Eliot and Yeats is not, I think, the best, but I found it so absorbingly interesting and so provocative that I was at it hammer-and-tongs until the small hours. The attempt to consider an Irishman as an Englishman does perhaps lead Mr. Alvarez some way up the garden path, but what a view he gets from up there!

The last essay in the book, *Art and Isolation,* is concerned with the modern movement in general; the premature death of its powerful influence; and, more slightly, with the "mass-produced", "wan", "convalescent", contemporary poetry now causing less than no excitement on either side of the Atlantic. Surely there must be something to everyone's distaste in this essay. Which doesn't necessarily affect its value; and needn't affect the reader's intense interest in work so thoughtful and so lively.

FRANCES BELLERBY

Selection: A. S. J. Tessimond (Putnam, 7s. 6d.).
Selected Poems: Leonard Clark (Hutchinson, 15s.).
The Two Freedoms: Jon Silkin (Chatto & Windus, 12s. 6d.).

ALTHOUGH it is eleven years since the publication of Mr. A. S. J. Tessimond's *Voices of a Giant City,* his third volume, *Selection,* contains only 33 poems, and two of these are reprinted from his two previous volumes. One could wish that his output had been larger. For though most of these poems have only a superficial quality, and once having made their point (usually at first reading) yield little more, they are extremely well done and provide enjoyable reading. They are, in any case, too short to present more than an aspect of a situation, or a fragment of experience, but how much Mr. Tessimond manages to concentrate into a few lines, without obscuring the sense or interrupting the flow of language. He is particularly effective with the brief character sketch :

> "He is in love with the land that is always over
> The next hill and the next, with the bird that is never
> Caught, with the room beyond the looking glass."
> (*Portrait of a Romantic*)

> "His seismographic needle will betray
> A falling fashion half the world away;
> Yet good and bad in art are one to him,
> Mirror of mode and weathercock of whim."
> (*A Man of Culture*)

In fact, it could be said that the best poems in this collection, such as *The British* and *If Men Were Not Striped Like Tigers,* are

variations of the same summarising technique, though there are one or two other poems (*i.e., Deaf Animal*) which suggest that Mr. Tessimond has potentialities which have never been allowed to develop.

Mr. Leonard Clark's selection has been made from *Poems* (1940), *Passage to the Pole* (1945), *The Mirror* (1948), and *English Morning* (1953), and the volume also contains a number of later poems which have appeared only in periodicals. In one of the poems the author says:

> "I know that I cannot look backwards
> Nor tread any road of my childhood,"

but it is distinctly noticeable that of the poems he has chosen to preserve from his earlier work a surprisingly high proportion are those in which he seems to be engaged in looking backwards or attempting, in memory, to re-tread the paths of childhood:

> "About my fifteenth year, there suddenly flew into my life . . ."
>
> "And I remember chestnut trees
> Whitening the woods on a green dappled day . . ."
>
> "There was a day when . . .
> I raced, in the flush of my childhood . . ."
>
> "There was a wood of beech trees near my home . . ."
>
> "When, head high in corn, I walked with my mother
> long golden meadows. . . ."

These extracts are not isolated examples; they are taken from separate poems and it would be easy to quote several others in like vein. On the strength of Mr. Clark's *Selected Poems,* then, there is danger that the reader unacquainted with his previous volumes might be misled into thinking of him as a poet whose range is largely confined to reminiscence and natural description. It is true, as his publishers observe, that "he writes in the enduring tradition of English pastoral poetry, with a delicate lyric quality and sense of atmosphere"—but it is only part of the truth, and this volume, however enjoyable in its own right, does not, in my opinion, do full justice to his work as a whole because it tends to give the impression that his range is somewhat narrower than it actually is.

Critics are apt to attach their classification tags to poets for convenience of treatment and comparison, but it is unwise for a poet to take the labels he has been given too seriously. I hope that I am mistaken, but a careful study of Mr. Clark's work as a whole inclines me to the belief that he has been persuaded (perhaps only for the time being) to withhold a number of valid poems which might appear to be in conflict with the simple "pastoral" classification. Many of the visionary, mystical and what have been called "apocalyptic" poems of *The Mirror* and *English Morning* have, it seems to me, been excluded on grounds other than those of quality. These poems are certainly more difficult to understand than his "nature" poems, but that is due, not to any obscurity of form or language, but to the complexity of the material, and they ought not to be overlooked on that account. Indeed, one could argue that they give depth and balance to his simpler poems. Admittedly, *Ecce Mors, Vision, The Wilderness* and *The Mirror* have been included, but these poems are so well known that they could hardly have been omitted without calling attention to the fact; and if they are among the best poems of this genre, they are more fittingly placed with such poems as *The Book, The Tower, The Acorn, The Town, Exaudi, The Thief* (all excluded), etc., with which they have real affinity.

To come back to the volume under review, I do not think a better selection could have been made from the lyrical and pastoral poems—as distinct from the class of poems mentioned above—and within the limits of the range presented there is a great deal more variety than most poets are able to achieve. Such poems as *Charles, Among Shallows, The Parting, There was a Child, Lighthouse* and *January Morning*—

> "Let all cease now,
> Silence be a surgeon to the wounded air,
> Snow straighten the cracked bough,
> Clothe every stone that is bare,
> Reshape the abandoned plough,
> Whiten field-fare."

show Mr. Clark at his best; certainly they have more significance for the reader than the poems of childhood, which the poet himself

prizes so highly. When reviewing *English Morning* I pointed out that it was in the disciplined forms rather than in the loose conversational lines that his poetry had its greatest effect. His *Selected Poems* bears this out, for when Mr. Clark uses free verse he has a tendency to sprawl, so to speak, and lose the poetic tension which rhyme and strict form give to his poetry; though in the later poems (three of which have appeared in OUTPOSTS) there is a more assured craftsmanship at work.

Whatever else may be said, in praise or disapproval, of Mr. Jon Silkin's work, it must be admitted that it is original, at a time when so many young poets seem to be falling over backwards in their anxiety to achieve the correct "neutral tone". There is nothing neutral about Mr. Silkin's poetry. It is hardly necessary to print his name above his poems—one recognises almost immediately the stylized mannerisms combined with simplicity of statement, the intensity of feeling (often betrayed by loose phraseology), and the over-running stanza form. In *The Two Freedoms* Mr. Silkin seems to be going through a transitional phase, between throwing off the influence of his first book (in which animals were used as symbols "because I can find no other way of expressing so potently man's pain") and launching out into the new sphere of poetic activity ventured upon in such admirable poems as *Light, Furnished Lives* and *For Two Children.* This may account for the sense of inner conflict and the hit-or-miss use of language. There are occasional echoes of *The Peaceable Kingdom:*

"From my mind a space is taken away . . ."

awkward constructions:

"I shook you awake but then
While you lay that I stood
In the brown air thickening gradually with
Both mutated pains."

". . . the scared, white children's faces' throng."

and imprecise imagery; but there is also an extended vision, a more direct attack upon the problems of the age, and the creation of new patterns of experience.

"And I turned from the inner heart having no further cause
To look there, to pursue what lay inside,
And moved to the world not as I would have the world
But as it lay before me, as a map lies open
Unalterable through what it signifies, without vision
Or fantasy, yet full of promise. . . ."

Like the world he has moved out to explore, then, Mr. Silkin's second volume is full of promise and it provides evidence of a development which may add new depths to his poetry.

HOWARD SERGEANT.

Third Day Lucky: Robin Skelton (O.U.P., 12s. 6d.).
Summer Unbound: E. L. Mayo (O.U.P. 20s.).
Hyphens: James Russell Grant (Putnam, 7s. 6d.).

IT is difficult to say that Robin Skelton has moved on since the *Patmos* volume, for his method of argument is concentric rather than periodic, tending towards the condition of the fabulous bird which finally disappeared. He varies his "voices", as he says; and the deliberate arrangement of the poems, while assisting the reader to follow his thought, disguises the progress of technique. The poem, *The Cat,* for instance:

"The cat stood under the lilac.
It was black . . ."

and so on: does it avoid both the sentimentality of William Allingham's "four ducks on a pond" and the symbolic images in Herbert Read's *Eclogues* (*The Woodman* in particular), or does it find a way between? And is it conscious or fortuitous that such a piece as *When I Stepped Out,* drawing attention to the phrase "the dark had taken the stars away", should bring to mind both the death of Amy in *The Family Reunion* ("the clock has stopped in the dark") and the refrain from the old song *The Lily and the Rose,* "the bailey beareth the bell away"? A similar sounding phrase,

"the phoenix hawks the dove away", occurs strongly and insistently in the poem *Paean for the Makers,* which in its title harks back to Dunbar. Can it be that he is continually just dodging a reference to the great John Skelton. Possibly these questions, and the further one, as to whether he really knows where he is going in "the dialogue of mind and time", cannot be answered from his present published output. In the meantime, here is a good poet, a sensible poet in both main meanings of the word, whose work is honest, well-thought, well-expressed, and well worth reading.

Professor Mayo's talent is neatly developed. "Good Lord deliver us from Great Men," he says. In the background, sometimes apostrophised or understood, are seen such figures as Prospero, Eliot, the Sleeping Beauty, Dylan Thomas, Hopkins, and a host of recognisable faces, past and present, which lend depth and perspective. Having endured "soot, chill, patience, and courtesy" in England, he projects sympathetic reminders across from Iowa. Subdued, concrete, and well-made, these forty-five poems are worth having.

One might fancy James Russell Grant finishing a short poem and muttering, "Well, that just about sums up that!"—for he appears to discard rather than display. His longer pieces reverse the method, and are less valuable: they have the flavour of short stories, the technique chancy, a touch of religion added now and them, with a plateful of legitimate sex and a sprinkling of violence. "Love is a lost identity," says Mr. Grant. Certainly he is not yet certain of his own, in spite of a basic genuine talent. More of his shorter pieces should make a worth-while volume.

HUGH CREIGHTON HILL.

NOTICES

POEMS INVITED. Contributions are invited for a well-known national magazine for whom Howard Sergeant acts as Poetry Editor. Lyrical poems (having a direct impact upon the reader) and light and humorous poems should be sent, together with a stamped addressed envelope, to Howard Sergeant at the *Outposts* address. Generous payment. Length not more than 20 lines.

OUTPOSTS PUBLICATIONS. The latest additions to the *Outposts* Modern Poets Series are: *Enchant With Plain Song* by Olive Walker, *Freedom of the City* by Irene de Castillejo, *Unfamiliar Mountain* by Carla Lanyon Lanyon, and *London Sonnets and Other Poems* by Edith Blake. See publication list for details.

THE HEADLANDS, poems by Howard Sergeant (published by Putnam & Co. Ltd.) can be ordered through local booksellers or obtained from this address, price 7s. 6d. (8s. including postage). "Those who despair of the aims and values of modern poetry should ponder Mr. Sergeant and think again."—*Contemporary Review.*

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